

# ERIF PILOT EVALUATION BRIEF

(Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families)

JUNE 13, 2021





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Station North, Baltimore





## Have you or your child tested positive for COVID-19?

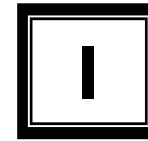
You may be eligible\* for financial assistance if:

- You are a Baltimore City Resident
- You or your child (under 18) have received a positive COVID-19 result since the beginning of the pandemic
- You are not eligible for other forms of COVID-19 assistance, such as previous stimulus checks or unemployment benefits

**If you qualify, please call the Esperanza Center ERIF hotline at 667-600-2442 for assistance.**

**\*Proof of eligibility will be requested.**

**For additional multilingual information related to COVID-19 (coronavirus), please visit:**  
**[coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov](https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov)**



# FOREWORD

This evaluation brief was prepared by Corron Sanders, Ph.D., Mary Aleta White, Ph.D., and Mindelyn Anderson, Ph.D. of Mirror Group, LLC for an independent evaluation of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) in Baltimore City's Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families (ERIF) program. The evaluation was funded by a public-private partnership between The Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) and the Baltimore Civic Fund (BCF).

The mission of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) is to promote community wellbeing, economic development, and the integration of immigrant communities by identifying needs and opportunities that immigrants bring to our city, while developing public-private partnerships to strengthen the development of these communities.

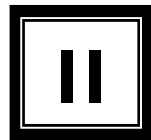
To meet the immediate needs of immigrant families during the pandemic, MIMA ERIF was implemented to provide direct assistance to immigrant families residing in the city of Baltimore.

Baltimore Civic Fund (BCF) is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents of Baltimore, one grant, one program, and one partnership at a time.

Mirror Group, LLC is a consulting firm that leverages partnerships with fellow evaluators, researchers, subject matter experts, and change makers to bring collaborative, participatory, utilization-focused evaluation, and capacity-building to a broader range of organizations.

*Immigrant families in Baltimore City have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. With the need for social distancing and related economic impacts, many of these families have been out of work, without a source of income. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrant families were already experiencing economic insecurity, and now, these families have few resources to sustain themselves financially through the pandemic. Due to the lack of income sources, many of these families are at risk for experiencing homelessness and hunger.*

*To meet the immediate needs of these families during the pandemic, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) established Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families (ERIF). Funds raised will be used to provide direct assistance to immigrant families residing in the City of Baltimore. This direct assistance will help families achieve economic stability by using funds towards rent, utilities and/or other basic needs."*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA), in response to the impact of COVID-19, collaborated with local community based organizations (CBOs) in Baltimore city to provide financial assistance through the Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families (ERIF) program. This evaluation brief covers the results of the program and its successes and challenges in the program's pilot implementation.

## Methods

The evaluation consisted of interviews with key program staff, observation of the ERIF Closeout call, document review of CBO partner's ERIF intake forms and reporting, and quantitative analysis of ERIF participant data.

**"ERIF provided \$1,161,000 to 2000 families and 244 individuals."**

## Results

ERIF provided **\$1,161,000** to **2000 families** and **244 individuals**. One-time disaster relief support of **\$500** for families and **\$250** for individuals was funding from **16 donors** institutions and many more individual contributions and dispersed in partnership with **13 CBOs** between **June and October, 2020**.

## Pilot Lessons Learned & Recommendations

### Program Design

- Define program success from the perspective of resident participants and CBO partners
- Collect data that connects participants to other public and nonprofit services

### Program Administration

- Develop standard operating procedures for intake forms, program administration manual, and formula for the volume of residents each CBO can serve
- Secure additional funding earmarked for enhanced CBO staffing and organizational systems refinement to administer collaborative programs

### Program Implementation

Enhanced ERIF program implementation will integrate:

- Phased approach from pilot to scale partner sites
- Resource guide for participants including FAQs
- Access to language translation lines
- Expanded social supports to include faith-based and hometown associations
- Bilingual and multicultural community navigators
- Financial literacy education



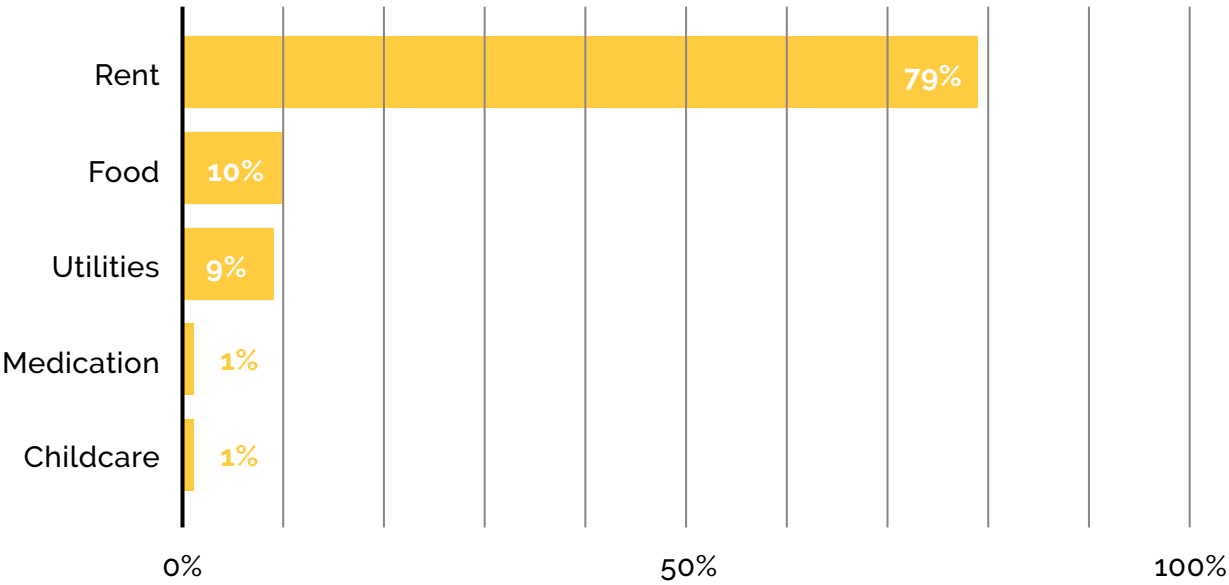
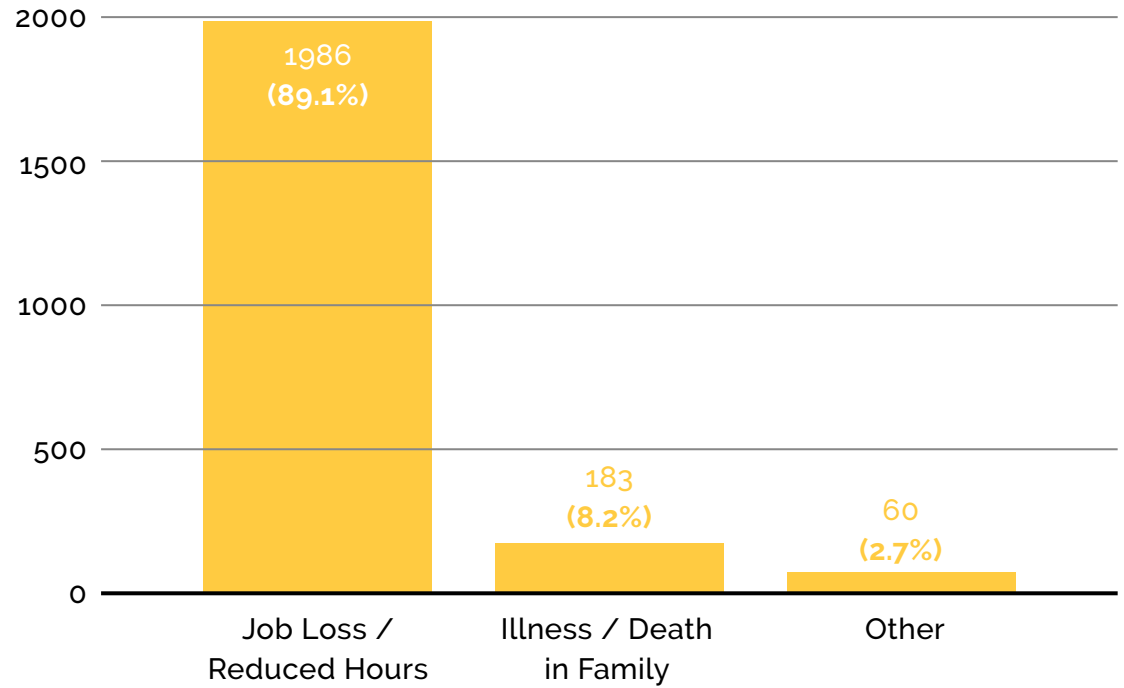
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# LOCAL HOUSING STABILITY BEYOND THE FEDERAL MORATORIUM

ERIF direct assistance was designed to help families achieve economic stability during COVID by using funds towards rent, utilities, and/or other basic housing needs. Although there was a Federal moratorium on evictions through January 31, 2021, 79% of ERIF participants reported that they intended to use the funds to pay their rent. The cost of living did not decrease during COVID-19 and ERIF results showed that families' income reduced. This was problematic for families who were already struggling to continue to pay for housing and other needs, including food, utilities, medication, and childcare.

[\(Click Here to see the ERIF Program Summary Client Profile from MIMA\)](#)

COVID Impact (Pct)



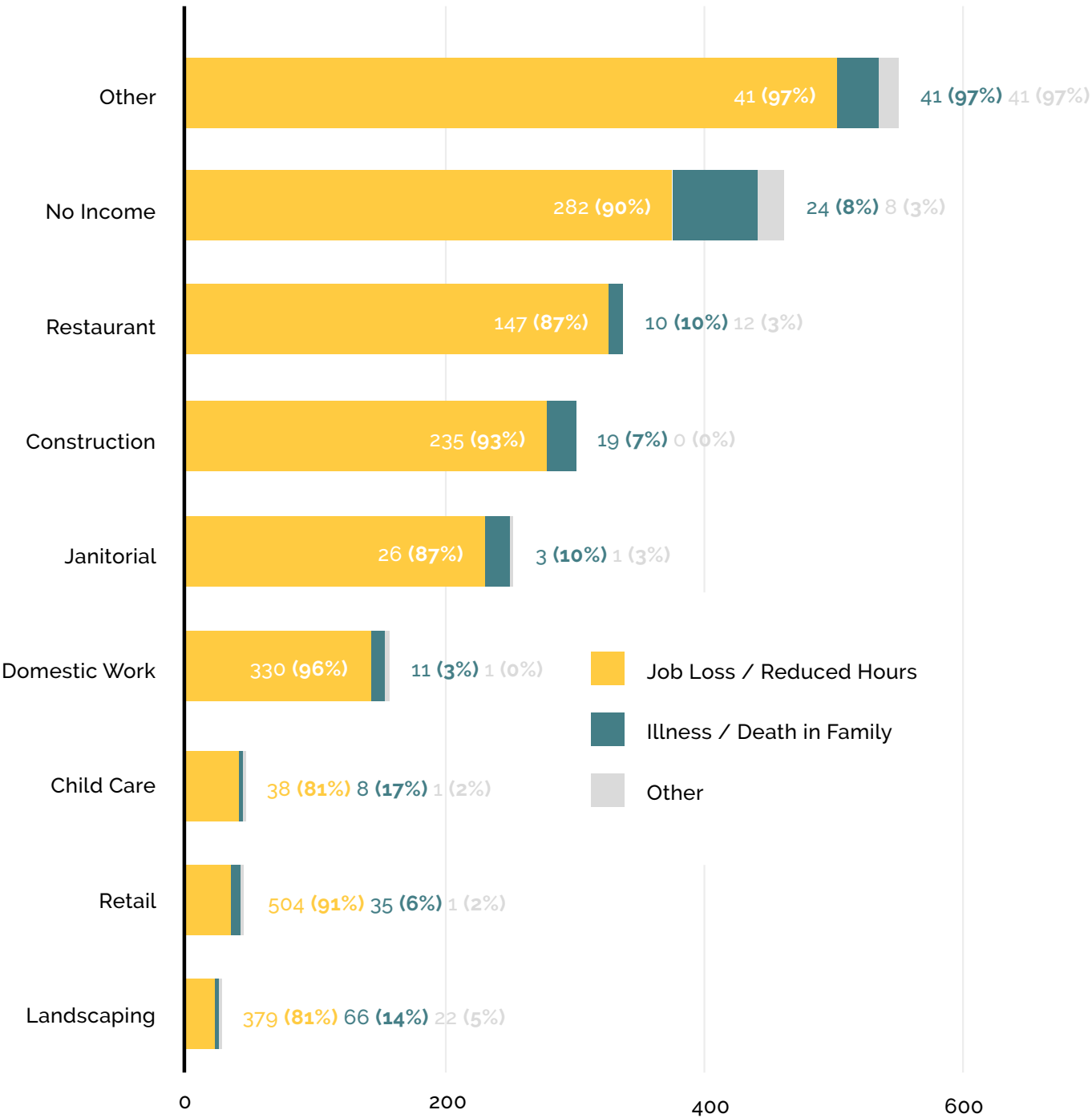
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RESOURCES  
FOR HARDEST  
HIT RESIDENTS

ERIF participants were previously employed in the service industries. Those included in Other were self-employed and those reporting prior employment as painter, driver, seamstress, barber, hair stylist, day laborer, factory and warehouse employees. Direct impact included job loss/reduced wages for upwards of 81% across priority industries, with higher COVID-19 illness or death reported among ERIF participants than recorded for Baltimore City at large during the June through October, 2020 program implementation period.

[\(Click here to view the source\)](#)

COVID Impact by Job Category (Pct)







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## MINOR CHILDREN AMONG MAJORITY OF HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

The majority of the households served by the ERIF program had children, were headed by females, and were located in the 21224 zip code, which includes a large number of Snap-eligible households with children who are not enrolled in the benefit. Prior to COVID-19, children are considered vulnerable populations because of their dependency on others for food, shelter and care. Recent studies show that COVID-19 has more devastating consequences on children, with social isolation and loss of job and income making children at greater risk for negative consequences such as child labor, abuse, child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

[\(Click here to view the source\)](#)

89%

of ERIF participant households  
had children under the age of 18

35%

of the households  
served by ERIF were  
enrolled in SNAP

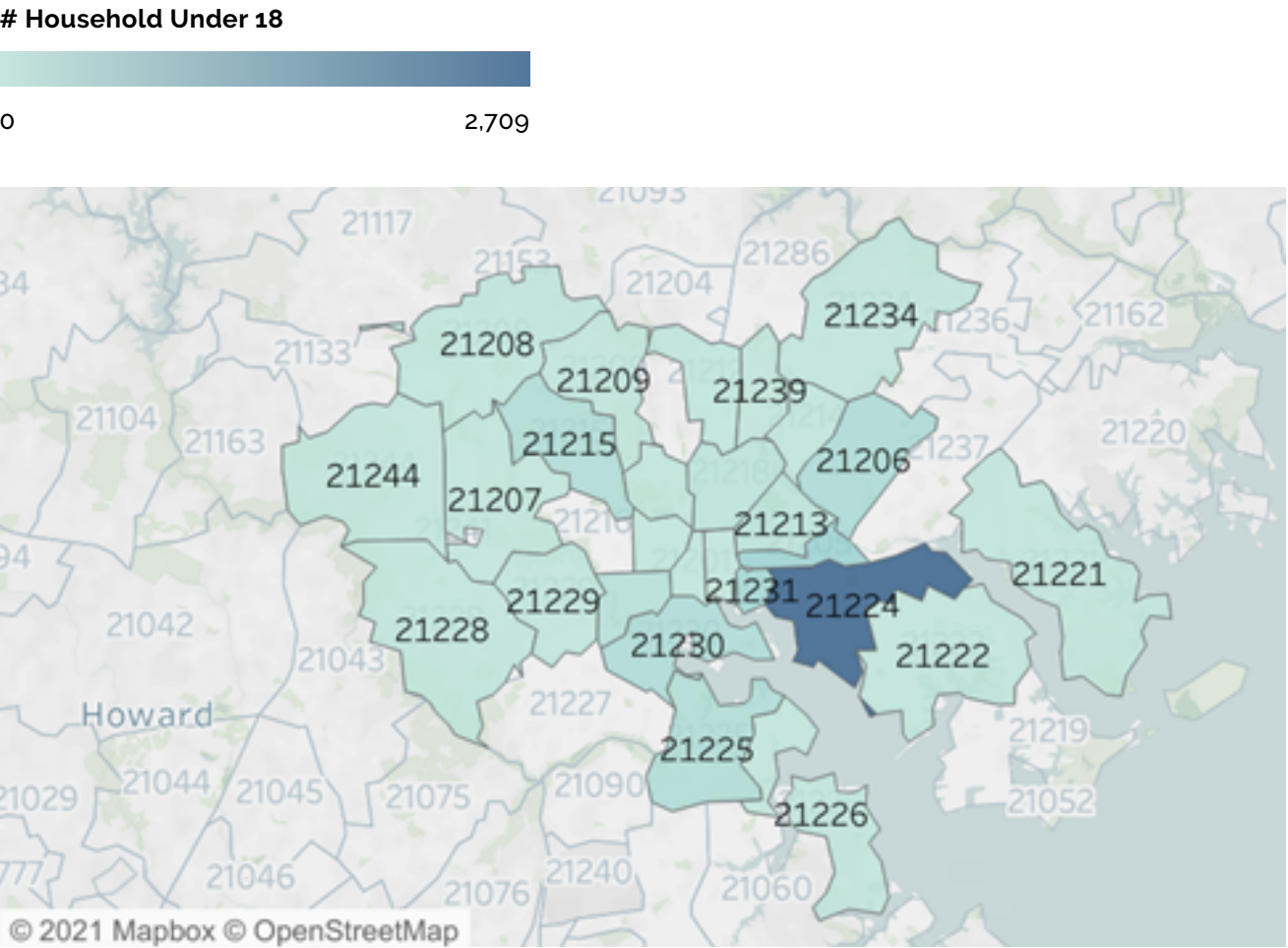
77%

of ERIF fund  
recipients  
were female

9 years

average of Baltimore City residence  
among participant immigrants

Map of Household (under 18)



Map based on zipcodes. Color shows sum of the number of Households with children (under 18). The marks are labeled by Zipcode.

This figure represents Number of Households with Children Under 18 who did not enroll for SNAP Benefits.



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# SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

One of the strongest benefits of the ERIF program was the ability to quickly identify families in need. This was achieved by working in partnership with local community based organizations (CBOs) who identified, reviewed and screened eligible immigrant residents within the first week of application submission and once confirmed, dispersed checks the following week.

Along with rapid distribution of funds, these CBOs were well positioned to support program participants with language, banking, and immigrant status needs. While **94%** of ERIF participants indicated Spanish was their primary language, CBOs provided language translation services at a time when government agency interpretation services were overwhelmed. In addition, **68%** of ERIF participants did not report

access to a formal banking account, yet CBOs partners were able to support electronic and check disbursement of funds to banked and unbanked recipients. Lastly, CBOs provided consistent remote communication and support at a time when offices were physically closed and transportation options were limited. (See MIMA ERIF Official Final Report for full program details.)





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# ERIF PILOT LESSONS LEARNED

## Program Design

**Define Success:** Although there were noted successes and challenges, it is key to define success and challenges from the participants' point of view.

**Future data collection:** As planning for ERIF 2.0 is underway, specific recommendations include collecting more information to help answer the questions related to program success.

1. Interview community based organization (CBO) to see what can be done better if this program continues.
2. Collect SNAP eligibility information in the data intake form to include in analysis.
3. Capture data to determine if COVID-19 impact is from the standpoint of the head of household or someone else in the household.



## Program Administration

**Standard Operating Procedures:** Constant and consistent communication with CBOs is imperative for the fidelity and implementation of the program. Community agencies each had their own intake form, and some participants were referred by multiple agencies. Creating a written documentation of standard operating procedures including a training manual can be beneficial, particularly if there is staff turnover. Also, identifying the volume of residents each CBO can serve and the method for systematically identifying this information will help improve program efficiency.

**Staffing or Sustainability:** The 5% CBO administrative fee was not enough to augment additional staffing needed to build out the systems to administer ERIF on top of existing work responsibilities. Increasing the administrative fees paid to CBO partners will enhance their ability to administer the program as part of a collaborative effort to serve immigrant families across the City inclusive and beyond their current client base.



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# ERIF PILOT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Program Implementation

**Financial Literacy Education:** All eligible and non eligible participants should be provided with a list of sessions or topics covering what it means to have access to a checking account, what information can and cannot be shared. This service helps provide additional financial capabilities.

**Community Navigators:** Enlist community navigators to connect residents to resources that include help with food and utilities assistance. Community navigators can also help connect residents to transportation services.

**Social Supports:** Add social support networks including churches, other religious institutions and hometown associations.

**Resource Guide for Participants:** Provide a list of resources and FAQ brochures to participants. Many of the identified resources needs included rental assistance and programs specifically designed for minority groups.

**Access to language line:** Match residents with available preferred language translators as language barriers were a concern for some program participants.

**Phased Approach:** Include a Plan Do Study Act phase approach as the program is implemented. Identify pilot sites to scale the launch and identify subsequent changes that may be required.



The Washington Monument, Washington Place, Baltimore

Source: commons.wikimedia.org



# THANK YOU

ERIF continues to serve immigrant families through December 31, 2021. We thank our individual donors and the following institutional partners for their support of this program.

## MIMA ERIF Donors

- The City of Baltimore
- Ayco Charitable Foundation / The Diaz Family
- Cape Foundation of Maryland
- Clayton Baker Trust
- France Merrick Foundation
- Hoffberger Foundation
- Leonard & Helen Stulman Foundation
- Lockhart Vaughan Foundation
- Morton and Jane Blaustein Foundation
- OSI Baltimore
- The Abell Foundation
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- The Straus Foundation
- The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation
- The Rauch Foundation
- The Zanvyl and Isabelle Krieger Fund - The Fund for Change
- Individual donors (Bob Meyerhoff, Towson Kent, and others)

For questions about how to participate in the program or how to make a donation please contact MIMA by visiting <https://mima.baltimorecity.gov/erif> or clicking [here](#).



Baltimore City Hall, Baltimore

Source: commons.wikimedia.org





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